BENGALURU, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024 www.Bangaloremirror.com 16 Pages PRICE ₹4

Bangalore Mirror ON SUNDAY

TEMP Max 29 | Min 18 | Humidity 83% Partly cloudy Sensex 78,041 | Nifty 23,587 | Gold 77,450 | Silver 91,500 | Dollar 85.07 | Euro 88.38 | GBP 106.40

As cyber crime police station's numbers all remain inaccessible, police officials clarify that reason behind this is transition and transfer of numbers; citizens say timely updates would have helped

OUT OF ORDER

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Even as cybercrimes in the city are skyrocketing, with 16,357 cases reported up to November 30, there is another frustrating issue victims are facing. All the listed phone numbers of the East Division Cyber Crime Police Station (CEN) seemed to be non-functional.

The three contact numbers—8277945509, 9449295760, and 080-22943089—are either switched off, unregistered, or simply unavailable. In a video shared online, social worker St. Broseph attempts to call these numbers, only to be met with messages indicating they were switched off or invalid. Frustrated by the lack of access, he took to social media, posting on X, "The Cyber Crime Department sent an

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 »

INSIDE» PG 7 Sunday Read: Con rise

How's the weather?

City misses weekend date with rain, while weatherman predicts the year will end on relatively warmer note

CITY PAGE 2

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THINGS TO DO

01 Science quiz

In celebration of Kannada Rajyotsava, the Tata Memorial Club, IISc is organising a science quiz for classes 11th and 12th. The event promises to be a fun-filled day of learning, exploration, and friendly competition. It's a wonderful opportunity for Class 11th and 12th students to showcase their knowledge and win attractive rewards. **Where: JN Tata Auditorium, IISc; When: December 28, 9.30 am to 4.30 pm**

02 Road to Lollapalooza

Dive into unforgettable weekends packed with electrifying music, vibrant dance, delicious food, and refreshing drinks where it's your time to shine, showcase your Lolla spirit, and earn ultimate bragging rights as a true fan. Witness the raw talent of Dhanji, Shreyas & Pasha Bhai, lighting up the stage with their powerhouse raps and feral energy. **Where: Koramangala SOCIAL; When: December 22, 8 pm onwards**

03 Comedy with tarot

After the first successful show in Bengaluru, the comedy show with Tarot Reading is back. Each ticket includes 1 reading by the tarot reader. Readings could be asked about relationships, careers, dating, love, pets, journeys, and friendships. **Where: Drunkling Comedy Club; When: December 24, 8 pm**

04 Circus entertainment

A world of enchantment, festive wonder, jaw-dropping acts, and non-stop entertainment for the entire family at Olympian circus **Where: Olympian Circus, JP Nagar; When: December 16 to January 5, 4 pm and 7 pm**

05 Magic show

The world-famous magician PC Sorcar (Porush) is in town, casting a spell-binding performance through his Mega Magic Show, "Indrajal." **Where: Town Hall; When: December 28 and 29, 4 pm and 7 pm**

City misses rain date due to change in path

Experts opine it may be warm winter till year end, with entire state likely to record 2 to 4°C above normal at nights

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City witnessed cold weather and continuous rain, with many getting caught in rain in 2nd week of December

The city was expected to experience a wet weekend due to a cyclonic circulation. However, a change in its path has spared Bengaluru from rainfall for now. Dr N Puviarasan, a scientist at the India Meteorological Department, explained, "The well-marked low-pressure area over the southwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal has shifted northwards and is now located over the west-central and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal as of 05.30 IST on December 20, 2024. The associated upper cyclonic circulation extends to 5.8 km above mean sea level. The system is expected to continue moving northwards and could intensify into a depression over the west-central Bay of Bengal in the next 12 hours. Afterward, it is likely to shift north-northeast awards, maintaining depression intensity for the following 24 hours." For Bengaluru, the forecast indicates a partly cloudy sky with maximum and minimum temperatures around 28°C and 20°C, respectively.

Meanwhile, some weather bloggers said it may not be an intense winter in Bengaluru. According to the Namma Karnataka weather update on the X platform, it may be a warm winter till year end. Going forward till year end, the entire state is likely to record 2 to 4°C above normal at nights. However, biting cold is making its presence felt across Karnataka in the last few days, with residents huddling in blankets to stay warm. Early mornings greet them with icy winds, making even daily activities like bathing a daunting task. Kalyana Karnataka, including Kalaburagi, Bidar, and Vijayapura, is experiencing an unusual chill this year. In Kalaburagi, the temperature dropped to a record 10.5°C, surpassing last year's low of 11°C. In Bidar's Bhalki taluk, the mercury plunged to 5.6°C, the lowest in the region. Neighbouring districts like Koppal and Yadgir also reported temperatures below 10°C in several areas. This unusual drop has been attributed to a depression in the Bay of Bengal, though its impact on Karnataka is expected to be minimal.

Cold wave hits northern Karnataka

IMD has predicted that cold winds will persist in northern districts like Vijayapura, Bidar, and Kalaburagi until December 22. Over the next three days, temperatures in most interior districts are expected to be 2 to 4°C below normal. While dry weather is forecast for most regions, light rain is expected in Chikkaballapur, Kolar, Bengaluru Rural, Bengaluru Urban, Ramanagara, Chamarajanagar, and Mysuru districts on December 23 and 24.

Health issues persist

Hospitals are reporting a significant rise in OPD (outpatient department) visits, with a 20% increase compared to regular days. The cold weather, particularly from December to February, is common in the district due to its proximity to various hills, which amplifies the chill during the winter months. This sudden drop in temperature is taking a toll on people's health, with rising cases of fever, cold, vomiting, and other illnesses.

Health issues during the winter months are varied, with children facing the brunt of cold, fever, and other illnesses like vomiting and stomach problems. Dr Satish, a healthcare specialist, said that parents need to be especially vigilant about their children's health. Dr Padma Prakash, a pediatric specialist, suggests that children wear warm clothing, maintain proper hygiene, and receive vaccinations, such as the annual flu shot. Parents should avoid self-treatment and seek medical advice for any illness to ensure proper care. "Cold weather often leads to a range of health problems, including common colds, fevers, joint pain, and skin issues like cracks and itching. People with asthma are also at greater risk during this time, and they should take extra precautions. Medical experts recommend drinking warm water, consuming easily digestible foods, and avoiding unnecessary outdoor exposure. It is also crucial to wear warm clothes to maintain body temperature and ensure that the food consumed is clean and hygienic. Additionally, cold drinks, ice cream, and exposure to cold winds or rain should be avoided. Doctors also warn that if cold symptoms like coughing and fever are left untreated, they could develop into more serious conditions like pneumonia," he added.

Rise in bone and joint pain among elderly this winter

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With the onset of the winter season, doctors in Bengaluru are witnessing a noticeable rise in elderly patients seeking treatment for bone and joint health issues. Colder temperatures and reduced physical activity during the season are contributing factors, according to experts.

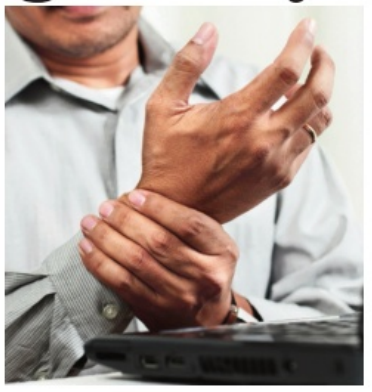
Dr Srikanth E Neruganti, MBBS MS Ortho, Apollo Clinic, Marathahalli, highlighted the growing concern. "We have seen around 30 to 40% elderly patients visit us for bone health-related issues in the past few weeks. There is also a rise in cases of severe joint pain this winter due to post-viral fevers. Most of these patients report multiple joint pain lasting anywhere between six weeks to three months," he said.

The colder weather impacts bone health in multiple ways. Limited exposure to sunlight reduces the body's ability to produce vitamin D, essential for strong bones. Additionally, lower temperatures can exacerbate conditions like arthritis, making joints more painful and less mobile. Muscle tightening due to cold weather also affects bone strength and stability, increasing the risk of stiffness and falls.

To combat these issues, Dr Neruganti suggests a range of measures. "Improving bone health during winter involves vitamin D supplementation, regular low-impact exercise, and fall prevention strategies. A calcium-rich diet and wearing warm clothing can also help maintain mobility and strength. Regular check-ups are important to monitor bone health and address any emerging issues promptly," he added.

> **"Improving bone health during winter involves vitamin D supplementation, and regular low-impact exercise**
> – Dr Srikanth E Neruganti, Apollo Clinic

Adding to the concern is a rise in post-viral arthritis cases, which is affecting patients across all age groups but particularly impacting the elderly. Dr Subrata Das, HOD of Internal Medicine and Diabetology at Sakra World Hospital, said, "In the last two to three months, we have been observing an increase in cases of viral fevers presenting with symptoms such as high fever, body pain, and fatigue. While the fever typically resolves within three to five days, joint pain often persists."



Post-viral arthritis is characterised by pain and swelling in joints like the wrists, ankles, and knees, often so severe that it restricts movement. "Based on recent observations, the likelihood of viral arthritis is significant. We are seeing approximately two to three patients daily with symptoms of viral arthritis," Dr Das noted.

He cautioned against assuming all joint pain after a fever is due to viral arthritis. "Proper diagnosis by a doctor is necessary to determine if the cause is solely viral arthritis or if there are other underlying factors."

Experts recommend early medical intervention for any persistent joint pain to ensure appropriate treatment. With the right precautions, such as maintaining an active lifestyle, following a balanced diet, and consulting doctors for timely care, elderly individuals can reduce the impact of bone and joint issues during winter.

NGT forms committee to assess B'luru's NO2

Recent study reveals that city's air pollution levels are higher than WHO guidelines; KSPCB is set to assess situation further

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The study also highlighted that road transport is second major contributor to NOx emissions in city

BM reported on Dec 10, highlighting Bengaluru's high levels of NO2 in a recent study

The National Green Tribunal has constituted a Joint Committee to obtain a factual report on the level of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) in Bengaluru's air. The tribunal has passed this order after media reports highlighted the findings of a study on NO2 Pollution and health risks associated with seven major Indian cities, including Bengaluru.

The joint committee will comprise the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), and Regional Director of the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

"...level of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) has been found twice the standards prescribed by World Health Organisation (WHO). (It) gives rise to substantial questions relating to the environment arising out of the implementation of enactments mentioned in Scheduled-I of NGT Act, 2010 which requires immediate attention and remedial measures in the larger public interest. However, before proceeding further in the matter, we find it appropriate to obtain a factual report for which we constitute a Joint Committee comprising KSPCB, CPCB, and Regional Director, MoEF&CC, Bengaluru," said the Green Court in its order passed on Thursday.

While CPCB will be the nodal authority for coordination and compliance of the committee formed, the committee will visit sites, collect relevant information, and submit a factual report within two months with the Southern Zonal Bench of NGT.

High levels of NO2 in Bengaluru's air were highlighted in an air quality analysis study conducted by Greenpeace.

The results of the analysis showed that Bengaluru's 2023 average annual concentration of NO2 in 2023 was found to be nearly twice the WHO's, health-based guideline. As per WHO, the average annual concentration of NO2 in the air should be 10µg/m3. However, Bengaluru's average NO2 level was recorded to be 23µg/m3. The study also underscored that the daily average NO2 concentrations also breached the relevant WHO health-based air quality guideline.

City Railway Station recorded the highest levels of NO2; concentration reaching more than 80% of the recommended level by WHO. The air quality monitoring station in Bapuji Nagar, located at the intersection of one of the biggest arterial roads in the city, recorded 21 days exceeding the much less stringent Indian national standard (40µg/m3).

Moreover, the two monitoring stations adjacent to roads with traffic, BTM Layout and Silk Board, were among the most polluted in the city, suggesting that traffic emissions are one of the important sources of NO2. The study also underscored that road transport is the second largest source of NOx emissions in the city.

Arrest warrant issued for cricketer Uthappa

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A warrant has been issued for the arrest of former Indian cricketer Robin Uthappa over allegations of fraud involving provident fund (PF) contributions for employees at a clothing company he manages. As the director of Centaurus Lifestyle Brands Pvt Ltd, Uthappa has been ordered to settle outstanding dues of 23.36 lakh by December 27 to avoid arrest

The warrant, issued by Shadakshara Gopal Reddy, Regional Provident Fund Commissioner-II and Recovery Officer, KR Puram, cites the company's failure to remit PF dues. Located in Indiranagar, Centaurus Lifestyle Brands Pvt Ltd reportedly owes significant contributions, delaying the settlement of PF accounts for its workers.

"Due to non-remittance of dues, this office is unable to settle the PF accounts of poor workers. In view of the above, you are kindly requested to execute the enclosed warrant of arrest," read a letter sent to the Pulakeshinagar Station House Officer (SHO).

However, a senior police officer revealed that Uthappa is no longer residing at the listed address and has been living in Dubai with his family for over a year. "We have returned the warrant to the PF office, informing them that Uthappa is no longer within our jurisdiction," the officer said, adding that no FIR has been registered against him yet. The matter remains unresolved, with authorities pursuing further steps to address the pending PF dues and enforce the arrest warrant.

PAGE 9

Eye on AI: Looking ahead

AI will continue to grow in 2025. But it will face major challenges along the way

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SGP SCHOOL
SG MASTER
4TH INDIA OPEN NATIONAL
HRIDAY PATEL
SG MASTER TAEKWONDO CENTRE
Triumphs at Goa Nationals! Star Performers:
1. Hriday patel - 5 gold
2. Aswath Iyer-2 gold, 2 silver
3. Darsh-3 gold, 1 bronze
4. Nihant-1 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze
5. Laksh-bronze
6. Anayra-2 gold
7. Shreyas-silver
8. Dhruvik-gold
9. Iaabh-2 gold
10. Keerthan-3 silver
11. Nikhil-1 gold, 1 silver
12. Avani-3 gold
13. Hema Kumari - gold
14. Siddharth-3 gold, 1 bronze
15. Rakshan - gold
16. Isha-gold
17. Ruthvik Sai - 2 silver
18. Liyansh-1 gold, 1 bronze
19. Pareekshith-silver
20. Hemant -2 gold
21. Pranav-2 bronze
22. Skanda-2 bronze
23. Paras-bronze
24. Keerthi-1 gold, 2 bronze
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Yelahanka Lake set back a decade due to sewage influx

Water quality report reveals severe damage to Puttenahalli Bird Conservation Reserve, with rising Coliform levels; Trust urges action to protect ecosystem

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A recent water quality analysis report of Yelahanka Puttenahalli Bird Conservation Reserve shows that the water body has suffered great damage since thousands of litres of sewage started entering the lake nearly six months ago. The analysis, conducted by a resident, shows that the conservation reserve is back to square one, where it was more than ten years ago. While the total Coliform levels in the reserve have shot up by more than 200%, faecal coliform values are through the roof.

As per standards prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), water resources are classified under Class B (water quality criteria for outdoor bathing) if the total value of Coliforms organism is found to be less than 500 MPN/100ml. However, the current level of total Coliform and faecal Coliform bacteria in the conservation reserve is 1600 MPN/100ml each. The water quality analysis report of February this year (a couple of months before sewage started to enter the lake) had a total Coliform value of 300 MPN/100ml and faecal coliform level of 13 MPN/100ml.

Similarly, levels of sodium, potassium, and phosphate have increased multifold, while the level of dissolved oxygen has dropped. Members of Yelahanka Puttenahalli Lake and Bird Conservation Trust (YPLBCT) say they must rethink plans to revive the lake as untreated sewage continues to enter the reserve. Sewage first started entering the water body in May this year,

Sewage began entering the waterbody in May due to incomplete stormwater drain by BBMP

due to an incomplete stormwater drain built by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). Following the incident, BBMP began pipe laying work inside and around the lake boundary by digging a walking path around the lake, with required permission from the Karnataka Forest Department. The Trust approached the National Green Tribunal and the Tribunal restrained BBMP from carrying out any work. It also ordered the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and BBMP to prevent sewage from entering the Reserve.

Thus, the civic agency, as a temporary measure, placed sandbags to block the influx of sewage. However, sandbags were removed more than a month ago and have not been replaced since. The Trust again approached the green court and raised the concern that neither BBMP nor BWSSB had taken any step to stop the polluted water from entering the lake. The Trust thus requested NGT to issue orders granting compensation for causing damage to the environment. The compensation can be utilised for the protection of the biodiversity of the reserve.

"No step has been taken to stop the influx of sewage. The lake has gone back to the same point as 10 years ago. We also wrote to the BBMP commissioner and BWSSB's chairman to express our concern regarding the continuous discharge of untreated sewage water into the Lake. We apprised them that this has resulted in severe damage to the entire ecosystem of the Lake and Bird Conservation Reserve," said KS Sangunn, chairperson of Yelahanka Puttenahalli Lake and Bird Conservation Reserve.

Communities lack sewage facilities

In a report submitted to the National Green Tribunal, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) highlighted that two gated communities located adjacent to Yelahanka Puttenahalli Bird Conservation Reserve are discharging sewage into the water body. As per the Board, Ramanashree California lacks a wastewater treatment plant and North Wood villas have only partial treatment. Both are near the conservation reserve.

"Sewage from these layouts enters Puttenahalli Lake through the stormwater drain. Hence the layouts need to establish their own UGD (Underground Drainage) network since the layout is not handed over to BWSSB," noted BWSSB in its report.

The Board has also made a case for its 6 MLD capacity wastewater treatment plant being constructed in the wetland area of the water body. As per the board, sewage generated in the north side of Ananthapura village will be diverted to the under-construction wastewater treatment plant of 6 MLD capacity. Apart from the above plan, BWSSB has also clarified that the sewage generated will be diverted to the existing intermediate sewage pumping station at Puttenahalli and pumping to Allasandra wastewater treatment plant of 10 MLD capacity and is operational. The green court recently barred BBMP from laying pipelines in Yelahanka Puttenahalli Lake reserve after the YPLBCT challenged forest department approval.

Lalbagh's Bonsai Garden gets international makeover

The Bonsai Garden at Lalbagh is being revamped to elevate it to international standards and is set to captivate visitors with its new look. Guided by international bonsai artist Anupama Vedachal, the garden is being redesigned by integrating Indian and Japanese art forms. The landscaping efforts, initiated two years ago, are bringing a fresh perspective to this iconic attraction. Speaking about the project, Anupama Vedachal shared, "We have meticulously designed around 50 varieties of bonsai trees, ranging from 18 to 80 years old, in a phased manner. Some plants have been sourced from Kolathur. Currently, one section has been developed, and further enhancements will follow in phases."

The Bonsai Garden now includes an information section to educate visitors about the art of bonsai. Various themes have been incorporated, blending different species of bonsai trees. The garden features natural stone sculptures that mimic trees growing amidst rocky terrains. Additionally, an amphitheatre area has been set up to showcase the plants. Covering 2.5 acres, the garden has completed the development of 50% of its area in the first phase. Officials have announced that this section will be opened to the public during the annual Fruit and Flower Show in January, with the remaining area slated for completion in the coming months.

A national first for bonsai enthusiasts

Lalbagh's Bonsai Garden holds the distinction of being the first of its kind in the country. Situated opposite the iconic Lalbagh rock, the garden's main entrance has been designed in the style of a Japanese pagoda, which is also being enhanced further. "This is a unique endeavour to design the Bonsai Garden in a distinctive manner. It will be developed step by step," said DS Ramesh, Director of Horticulture. Vedachal added, "Designing the garden has been a long-standing ambition. When the opportunity arose, I took on the project. I have been working on the landscaping here for two years now."

Dr M Jagadeesh, Joint Director of Horticulture (Parks and Gardens), highlighted the significance of the initiative, stating, "Lalbagh is already a globally recognised landmark. The Bonsai Garden is being designed with the goal of bringing it to international prominence. Alongside the existing bonsai trees, additional varieties have been introduced. Currently, 40% of the project has been completed, with ongoing development efforts. A budget of Rs.55 lakh has been allocated for the garden's transformation." — BMB

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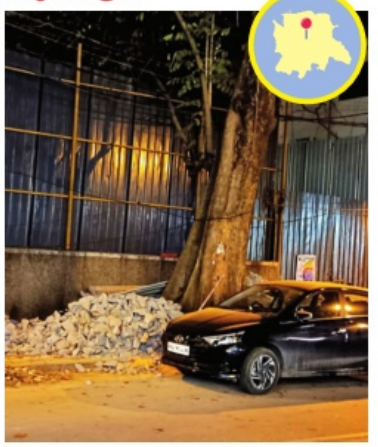
Footpath blocked

Jayanagar



In Jayanagar 3rd Block, 8th F Main Road, a builder has blocked the entire footpath with construction materials and debris, creating major inconvenience for pedestrians.

Path obstructed

Richmond Road

The footpath near Richmond Circle on Richmond Road has remained obstructed for almost a year, causing ongoing inconvenience to pedestrians.

Tree trouble

Palmgrove Cross Road

A fallen tree has blocked Palmgrove Cross Road for 15 days, with no action taken to remove the hazardous obstruction.

Nine killed in 2 accidents in B'luru Rural, Mandya

Nine people, including two children and three students were killed in separate road accidents reported from Bengaluru Rural and Mandya districts in Karnataka on Saturday.

In the first incident, six persons were killed on the spot on the Bengaluru-Pune National Highway-4 near Taalekere village, close to T Begur near Nelamangala town on the outskirts of Bengaluru. A container truck overturned and crushed their car.

All six victims, travelling in the car, were from the same family, including two children. The deceased were identified as Yagappa Gol (48), Gowra Bai (42), Deeksha (12), Jaan (16), Vijayalaxmi (36), and Ayra (6). All were residents of Vijayapura district.

The police stated that the family was on a weekend trip when the tragic accident occurred. The incident happened after the truck driver lost control over the vehicle, causing it to overturn and crush the car.

The devastating road accident near Nelamangala on the outskirts of Bengaluru on Saturday, which led to the death of six people

The crash also caused a 10-kilometre-long traffic jam on the national highway. The impact was so severe that three cranes were required to move the container and retrieve the bodies trapped underneath. The family had purchased the car just six months ago.

Speaking to the media, the truck driver, Arif, who is undergoing treatment at the hospital, claimed the accident happened while he was trying to avoid hitting a car ahead of him. "I was driving towards Bengaluru from Dabaspet town. While trying to avoid crashing into the car in front of me, my truck crossed the divider and overturned. The accident happened because of the car ahead. I am deeply pained by the incident. I couldn't remember anything immediately after the accident. When I regained consciousness, the car was under the truck," he explained.

In another accident, three students were killed and another was critically injured on National Highway 209 near Bosegowdanadoddi, close to Mandya city, on Saturday.

The deceased were identified as Pranav, Akash, and Adarsh, while Pruthvi is in critical condition.

The victims were travelling from Bengaluru to the tourist spot Talakadu in Mysuru district. According to police, the accident occurred when their car, after overtaking an RTC bus, collided with a truck coming from the opposite direction. The incident occurred within the Malavalli police station limits. **–IANS**

99 booked in B'luru for fake news roll

From 2021-24, 247 cases have been registered against those spreading fake news in state, with Bengaluru leading

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Think twice before spreading fake news, as you may be in trouble. Bengaluru tops the list in the state where 99 people have been booked by police for spreading fake news. During a recent reply in the Legislative Council recently, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that between 2021 and 2024, a total of 247 cases have been registered against those spreading fake news on social media platforms, which have been disrupting societal harmony. He said that social media monitoring cells have been established at both district and police station levels, ensuring continuous vigilance over social media platforms.

"Secret informants and beat staff are also monitoring and collecting information on such activities. All police officers are keeping a close watch on individuals spreading fake news, collecting information, and taking legal action accordingly," CM said.

At each police station, Social Media Monitoring Cells (SMMC) have been set up to track and take action against individuals spreading harmful fake news that affects society's well-being. Constant vigilance is maintained over provocative messages, fake news, and hate speech circulating on social media and YouTube channels. If any harmful messages or fake news are found, legal action is taken against the responsible individuals. To prevent the spread of fake news, social media units have created fake accounts to monitor and track those disseminating false information.

"In every police station area, WhatsApp groups have been created involving the public and relevant police personnel, who continuously gather information on individuals spreading fake news," CM added.

> **"All police officers are keeping a close watch on individuals spreading fake news, collecting information, and taking legal action accordingly**
>
> –CM Siddaramaiah

So far, a total of 247 cases have been registered across various districts. Bengaluru city leads with 99 cases, followed by Mysuru city with 2 cases and Mangaluru city with 6 cases. Belagavi city and Kalaburagi city each have 2 cases, while Tumakuru district has 9, Kolar district has 2, and Ramanagara district has 3 cases. Chikkaballapura district also has 3 cases, and Mysuru district has 1 case. Mandya and Hassan districts each report 3 and 2 cases, respectively. Kodagu district has the highest number in the list with 14 cases, while Chamarajanagar district has 2, and Belagavi district has 3 cases. Vijayapura and Chitradurga districts both have 2 cases, and Haveri district has 1 case. Shivamogga district has 10 cases, Davanagere district has 2, Dakshina Kannada district has 7, and Uttar Kannada has 45 cases. Chikkamagaluru district and Udupi district each have 7 and 5 cases, respectively. Kalaburagi district, Bidar district, and Koppal district each report 2, 1, and 1 cases, while Yadgir district and Vijayanagara district have 4 and 5 cases, respectively.

IN CITY

Kohli's pub gets notice for fire safety violations

Civic body Bengaluru Bruhat Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has issued a notice to cricketer Virat Kohli's pub 'One8 Commune' over alleged fire safety violations.

The restaurant, located on the sixth floor of Ratnam's Complex on upscale MG Road near the Chinnaswamy International Cricket Stadium, has been reported to be functioning without a no objection certificate from the Fire Department.

Earlier, a notice was issued on November 29 on the complaint of social activists HM Venkatesh and Kunigal Narasimhamurthy. However, no reply has been received to date.

Now, the BBMP has been given a seven-day deadline, and if clarification is missed this time too, legal action will be initiated against the said pub, the notice issued by the Health Officer of Shanthinagar Division of the BBMP said.

Complainant Venkatesh stated, "Many restaurants, bars, and pubs in high-rise buildings across Bengaluru are operating without any fire safety measures in place. In the past, fire accidents in Bengaluru have led to significant loss of life and injuries."

To prevent such incidents, BBMP and the Fire Department have conducted audits. They identified several buildings without proper fire safety measures and issued rules stating that licenses should not be granted to such buildings and operations should not be permitted on those premises.

"Despite these rules, violations continue unabated. It remains to be seen how proactive BBMP and the Fire Department will be in this case in ensuring safety and implementing these measures effectively," he maintained.

Earlier, in July, an FIR was registered against One8 Commune for operating past the 1 am deadline. The establishment was open and serving customers at 1.20 am. **–IANS**

Ganja dealer arrested

A man was arrested for selling marijuana near Vedika Bhavan in the Vishwanagar cemetery. Acting on a tip-off, officials apprehended the suspect on last week, seizing 15.93 kg of ganja valued at Rs 4.5 lakh.

During interrogation, the accused admitted to procuring the drug from Maharashtra, at a low price and transporting it to Bengaluru for resale. He was waiting to deliver it to a contact when he was caught.

A case has been registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act at the Vidyaranyapura Police Station. The accused was produced before the court on December 13 and remanded to judicial custody. Police revealed that another suspect involved in the case is absconding, and efforts are underway to locate them. **–BMB**

Reserve 0.5% seats for transgenders, NLSIU told

The Karnataka High Court has directed the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) to provide 0.5 percent interim quota to the transgenders in admissions and fees waiver till the varsity formulates a policy on reservation for such applicants. The bench headed by Justice Ravi V Hosmani also asked NLSIU to approach the Centre and the state government for appropriate grants to cover the financial aid. The court took note of the one percent reservation provided for transgenders in employment by the state government to prescribe a 0.5 percent quota for the community. The court direction was based on a petition filed by Mugil Anbu Vasantha. **–PTI**

KFD to use live location tracking in investigations

Forest officials can now access Call Detail Records and tower location details of those accused in forest offences, to expedite proceedings while ensuring accountability

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"The information will only be released in matters related to investigation of forest offences"

The Karnataka Forest Department's (KFD) Vigilance wing has issued a circular stating that CCFs (Chief Conservators of Forest), CFs (Conservators of Forest), and DCFs (Deputy Conservators of Forest) can get live locations and other information, such as Call Detail Records (CDRs), subscriber detail records (SDRs), and tower location details (TLD), of accused persons in forest offence cases.

Officials can obtain the information by contacting the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (APCCF) Vigilance and Wildlife.

The instruction has been issued following a notification by the Government of Karnataka authorising APCCFs (vigilance and wildlife) to receive CDR, Subscriber Detail Record (SDR) Dumps, Tower Locations, and Tower Dumps every month from the Telecom Service Providers up to September 30, 2025.

The circular by KFD underlines that confidentiality of the information has to be maintained by the official seeking the information. Once the investigation is over, CDR and other details have to be destroyed mandatorily. In case of misuse, the officials who have sought the CDR will be held responsible.

While KFD officials term it as a direction following the procedure to solve offence cases, concern has been raised regarding the misuse of this information.

"This is probably the first time that there are talks about sharing the live location of those embroiled in forest or wildlife offence cases. If the data is used within the legal framework for genuine causes, it is a welcome step. However, the department must clarify measures that are being taken to ensure that this information will not be misused. The department should specify measures that are being taken to avoid any possible misuse of this power," said an expert on the condition of anonymity.

> **"This is probably first time there are talks about sharing live location of those embroiled in forests offence cases. If data is used legally, it is a welcome step**
>
> –Expert

The notification by the state government underscores that the officers authorised shall comply with all the directions laid down under The Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguard for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rule 2009. Moreover, copies of the intercepted messages shall be destroyed when no longer required.

KFD officials say that CDRs, SDRs, and TLD of forest offence accused will be provided to DCFs, CCFs, and CFs only in case of investigations and through APCCF vigilance and wildlife, ensuring accountability and thus preventing misuse.

"We need to follow the procedure. Such information is useful for field officers while discharging their duties under The Karnataka Forest Act 1963 and Wildlife Protection Act 1972. Officials who request the information will have to practice discretion. The information will only be released in matters related to the investigation of wildlife and forest offences. Thus chances of misuse are minimal," said a senior KFD official.

They added, "The department has approached the home secretary to give DCFs, CFs, and CCFs power to directly access information such as CDR, SDR, tower location, and live location of accused in case of forest and wildlife-related offences. This is to expedite the investigation process. However, this has not been approved yet."

"A few years back, CDR powers were given to CF of Bandipur, BRT, and Nagarhole tiger reserves, however, after a couple of years, it was withdrawn for unknown reasons and were then retained only with APCCF Vigilance and Wildlife," said the expert.

Golden Chariot train back on tracks

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South India's only luxury travel train, the Golden Chariot which was shut for a while will be restarted soon. Tourism Minister HK Patil who relaunched the train on Saturday said that the train service was temporarily halted in 2018, and has now been revived. Ownership of the Golden Chariot is shared between Indian Railways (50%), the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (25%), and Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) (25%).

He said that the interiors of the train have been artistically designed, with its 18 coaches named after Karnataka's royal dynasties, such as Kadamba, Hoysala, and Chalukya. It offers luxurious amenities for dining and accommodation, taking passengers on a journey to globally renowned heritage sites, the serene Western Ghats, ancient coastal destinations, and cultural landmarks. This initiative also provides economic opportunities for hotels, artisans, and tour operators. Recognised among the world's top seven luxury train journeys, the Golden Chariot has earned several accolades over the years.

Features and facilities

Officials said that the train boasts 44 well-appointed cabins, en-suite bathrooms, Wi-Fi, and two restaurants named Ruchi and Nalapaka, serving Indian and international cuisines. Additional facilities include a lounge bar and a fitness centre, ensuring a comfortable and opulent travel experience. The Golden Chariot is scheduled to begin its tour from December 21 to 26 offering a five-day luxury journey starting and ending in Bengaluru. The route covers iconic destinations such as Mysuru, Kanchipuram, Mahabalipuram, Thanjavur, Kochi and Mararikulam providing travellers an immersive cultural and historical experience.

Patil said that the second leg titled 'Pride of Karnataka' tour will run from February 1 to 6, 2025, taking passengers on a scenic expedition through Bengaluru, Nanjangud, Mysuru, Halebidu, Chikkamagaluru, Hosapete, and Goa. For those seeking an exclusive experience, the Sojourn of South (Chartered) tour is set to operate between December 29, 2024, and February 12, 2025, offering a tailored itinerary for an unparalleled luxury travel adventure.

Boost to tourism

Patil added, "This initiative aims to bolster Karnataka's position as a top tourism destination in India. By 2029, the state plans to rank third among Indian states for attracting the highest number of tourists."

Aquascaping blooms in Namma Bengaluru Aquarium

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Aquascaping, the art of arranging aquatic plants, rocks, stones, and driftwood in aquariums to create natural and visually appealing underwater landscapes, is gaining popularity in Bengaluru. Enthusiasts are transforming home aquariums into stunning aquatic ecosystems, blending creativity with an appreciation for nature. At the newly restored Namma Bengaluru Aquarium near Cubbon Park, the concept is being actively promoted. Visitors are not only admiring the intricate designs but also seeking guidance on how to replicate these aquascapes at home.

The trend emphasises sustainable practices, using live plants and natural materials to create self-sustaining ecosystems that mimic riverbeds, lush forests, or serene islands.

Aquascaping in reopened Namma Bengaluru Aquarium

Reopened to the public on May 31, 2024, after a two-year renovation, the aquarium has become a hub for aquatic enthusiasts. The restoration has transformed the space into a facility featuring over 300 species of fish, 350 plant varieties, and 30 species of invertebrates. Key attractions include a 65,000-litre community aquarium and an 85,000–95,000-litre koi pond, showcasing Japanese koi fish, known for their colourful patterns and symbolic luck.

The first floor of the aquarium is dedicated to aquascaping and themed exhibits inspired by Karnataka's diverse aquatic ecosystems. "We have identified 5-6 locations, such as the Sahyadri ranges and Netrani Reef, and recreated them using native plants and fish," says Likith N, Director of Namma Bengaluru Aquarium Pvt Ltd. These immersive displays highlight the region's unique aquatic biodiversity, providing a visual treat for visitors while promoting awareness about conservation.

To cater to the rising interest in aquascaping, the experts from Namma Bengaluru Aquarium will soon offer workshops on planted aquarium fishkeeping and aquascaping techniques. A retail store on-site allows visitors to purchase aquatic plants, fish, and equipment, further fueling the trend. "Internationally, aquascaping has been growing, and now it's slowly gaining traction in India. It's exciting to see more people take an interest in creating miniature mountain ranges, forest landscapes, and reef systems in their aquariums," Likith adds.

The aquarium's reopening has seen an impressive footfall, with 700-1,500 visitors on weekdays and 2,000-4,000 on weekends. "Compared to the footfall the public aquarium was seeing earlier, the response now has been overwhelming. We've received excellent feedback," says Likith.

Namma Bengaluru Aquarium also showcases a variety of exotic species, including Red Belly Piranhas, Lipstick Naso Tangs, Bamboo Sharks, and Queen Coris, along with an array of starfish, reef lobsters, and jellyfish. These displays are a major draw for visitors, many of whom come to learn about these fascinating creatures and incorporate similar setups in their home aquariums.

THE SUNDAY READ

Web of con

Cyber criminals making away with ₹5.4 crore each day from B'lureans

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Data has revealed that each day, cyber criminals are stealing 5.4 crore through methods like digital arrest scams, fake investment schemes, and part-time job frauds in Bengaluru. Till November, fraudsters have siphoned off ₹1,806 crore. Victims have reported losing amounts ranging from ₹50,000 to ₹9 crore. On average, 48 complaints are registered daily, with the city recording 16,357 cybercrime cases by the end of November.

Fraud trends

Fraudsters are primarily using promises of high returns on investments to trap victims. Bengaluru has recorded 3,010 such cases, followed by 2,697 cases of online part-time job and Google rating scams. Police have successfully blocked ₹600 crore from being laundered by scammers during the critical "golden hour" after a crime is reported. Of this, ₹122 crore has been seized and is in the process of being returned to victims. A senior official said, "Citizens are advised to report fraud immediately by calling the helpline 1930. The first hour after a fraud, referred to as the golden hour, is crucial for freezing transactions before funds are moved across multiple accounts."

Intriguing trends

Cybercrime statistics showcase both alarming escalations and significant advancements in law enforcement responses. The number of cases filed has been fluctuating. From 2020 to 2021, the number of cases decreased by 27.7%, dropping from 8,892 to 6,426. This decline could be attributed to increased public awareness campaigns or possibly fewer scams reported during the pandemic. However, the post-pandemic period saw a surge, with cases rising by 54.7% in 2022 to reach 9,940. This escalation coincided with a shift towards greater digital dependency. The upward trend continued into 2023, where cases almost doubled with a 77.4% increase to 17,632. Interestingly, 2024 recorded a 7.2% drop in cases, with 16,357 incidents reported, potentially reflecting improved vigilance or preventive measures, according to police.

2024 in types of cybercrime

TInvestment scams
3,010 cases

Digital arrest scams
1,417 cases

Part-time job scams
2,697 cases

Employment fraud
1,423 cases

Credit card fraud
1,105 cases

> **"Recovery of stolen funds has also seen progress, albeit at a slower pace. 2024 saw recovery of ₹122.87 crore, which is an 80.2% rise from the previous year**
>
> **-Senior official**

Financial Impact

According to statistics, the amount stolen surged steadily over the years, indicating that while the number of cases fluctuated, the scale and sophistication of scams increased significantly. Between 2020 and 2021, the stolen amount rose by 34.7%, from ₹73.38 crore to 98.84 crore. A steep 175% jump was recorded in 2022, with ₹271.89 crore being siphoned off, reflecting cybercriminals' evolving strategies to target high-value victims. In 2023, the stolen amount increased further by 147.5% to ₹673.03 crore, and by 2024, the figure had skyrocketed by 168.5% to a staggering ₹1,806.69 crore.

Freezing transactions

There have been commendable strides in freezing fraudulent transactions and recovering stolen funds. From 12.42 crore in 2020, frozen amounts grew by 103.6% to 25.29 crore in 2021, and further by 215.7% to 79.82 crore in 2022. The trend continued with ₹306.44 crore frozen in 2023, marking a 283.8% increase from the previous year. In 2024, ₹611.29 crore was successfully frozen, a 99.5% rise, showcasing enhanced rapid response mechanisms.

Recovering funds

A senior official said, "Recovering stolen funds has also seen notable progress, albeit at a slower pace. In 2020, 6.91 crore was recovered, increasing by 189.4% to 19.99 crore in 2021. By 2022, the recovered amount rose to 34.75 crore, a 73.8% increase, and in 2023, ₹68.16 crore was retrieved, marking a 96.1% rise. 2024 witnessed a recovery of ₹122.87 crore, representing an 80.2% increase from the previous year. This indicates significant milestones in victim compensation, highlighting the efficacy of evolving law enforcement strategies."

Marital discord & death: Debate over use and misuse of law

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The recent suicides of Head Constable Tippanna Alugur, 33, from Hulimavu Police Station, and techie Atul Subhash, have reignited discussions on domestic violence and harassment within families. Both individuals left behind notes accusing their spouses and in-laws of harassment. Tippanna Alugur reportedly blamed his wife and father-in-law in his death note, while Atul Subhash left a 24-page letter alleging that his wife and her family demanded ₹3 crore to withdraw what he claimed were false cases against him.

While these cases highlight the grievances of men, they also bring attention to the plight of women, many of whom face domestic abuse and harassment, often linked to dowry demands. Laws protecting women were established to address such injustices. However, instances of misuse of these laws have sparked debates about ensuring fairness in addressing grievances.

Change in law not an answer

Domestic violence and harassment are not exclusive to men or women, they are societal issues that need a balanced and comprehensive approach, legal experts say. City-based advocate and activist Rajalaxmi Ankalagi told Bangalore Mirror that such incidents are not new. She pointed to the recent NCRB survey, which reveals that nearly 1.7 lakh people committed suicide in 2022, with about 50% of these cases linked to marital issues. In this percentage, the ratio of men to women is almost equal.

"There are numerous reasons for divorce and disputes among couples, including domestic violence. While there are existing laws such as the Domestic Violence Act and the BNS Act, misuse of these laws does occur. However, if we focus solely on the misuse, we risk undermining the original intention behind these acts," she stated.

Rajalaxmi emphasised that domestic violence and other forms of violence against women remain serious concerns in the country. "Calls for changes in the law must take into account the larger population and a comprehensive view of the issue. Every law should be balanced tactically, considering all facts. At this stage, changes to the law are not required. While loopholes in the system can be questioned and addressed, impulsive decisions should be avoided if the law is benefiting a larger section of society," she added.

Mental health

Gaurav Gill, consultant psychologist with Manobal Foundation, Delhi, highlighted the gravity of anomic suicide. These suicides occur due to a lack of social regulation and often during periods of high stress and frustration. "Anomic suicides are triggered by sudden and unexpected changes in life circumstances, such as extreme financial loss. The disappointment and overwhelming stress individuals face in such situations may drive them to see suicide as a means of escape," he explained.

He also stressed on the importance of addressing such feelings constructively. "Allow yourself to process your emotions rather than suppressing them. Seek support from friends, family, or a therapist. Taking care of your health through regular exercise, proper nutrition, and sufficient sleep also plays a critical role in supporting mental health," he added. He urged individuals to seek professional help when necessary. "If processing emotions on your own becomes too challenging, therapy or counselling can help in working through complex emotions and developing effective coping strategies. Any threat of suicide should be taken seriously, reported to the family, and immediate assistance from a psychiatrist should be sought," he stressed.

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORYBEHINDTHEPHOTO

MORNING VIEW

Our reader captured this image during a walk -- of a path winding into the light fog of a winter morning in Bengaluru

The picture was clicked by BM reader
T Ashwini Mehra

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

DID YOU KNOW?

An "amphibious mouse" with partially webbed feet that eats aquatic insects was among 27 new species discovered during a 2022 expedition to Peru's Amazon, according to Conservation International. Scientists also discovered a spiny mouse (pic), a squirrel, eight types of fish, three amphibians and 10 types of butterflies, Trond Larsen, head of Conservation International's Rapid Assessment Program, told Reuters this week. He added that another 48 species found by investigators were potentially new, but needed further study.
The new species were found in Alto Mayo, a protected area with several ecosystems, Indigenous territories and villages. "Discovering so many new species of mammals and vertebrates is really incredible, especially in such a human-influenced landscape as Alto Mayo," Larsen said. The expedition between June and July 2022 was made up of 13 scientists plus local technicians and members of Indigenous groups. Another favorite discovery was the blob-headed fish, a type of armored catfish, he said.

— Reuters

GET HEARD WITH MIRROR

9591233247

Let's see how much you know about Namma Bengaluru, folks. Tell us something incredible and mind-boggling about this beautiful city and our editors and researchers will check it out. If it's credible, we'll give it a shout-out, with your name and picture.

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Starbucks to quit Indian market? No, claim made in social media is false

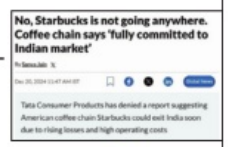
PTI Fact Check

Multiple social media users recently claimed that Starbucks, the international coffeehouse chain,was about to exit the Indian market. However, the PTI Fact Check Desk, in its investigation, found the claim to be fake. The claim originated from reports suggesting that the company was planning to exit the Indian market amid high operating costs and low profitability in the country. Starbucks entered India in 2012 through a partnership with Tata Consumer Products.

Claim: A Facebook page shared on December 19 a post claiming that Starbucks was about to exit the Indian market. The caption of the post read: "Starbucks to Exit India" Here is the link and archive link to the post. Below is a screenshot of the same.

An X (formerly Twitter) user had also shared a post on December 19, along with the screenshot of an article published by 'The Philox'. The caption of the post as well as the headline of the purported article read, "Starbucks to exit India due to high costs, bad taste, and mounting losses".

Investigation: The Desk conducted a customised keyword search on Google and found the article published in The Philox. After a thorough read, the news piece did not consist of quotes or official statements neither from Starbucks nor from TATA Consumer Products. Taking cue from this, the Desk conducted a customised keyword search on Google and came across a report by Hindustan Times, which quoted Tata Consumer Products refuting the claim. The headline read: "Starbucks is not exiting India: Tata Consumer denies 'baseless' report of coffee chain quitting country".


No, Starbucks is not going anywhere. Coffee chain says 'fully committed to Indian market'

Tata Consumer Products has denied a report suggesting American coffee chain Starbucks could exit India soon due to rising losses and high operating costs

TATA

"Starbucks is fully committed to the Indian market. Any statements suggesting otherwise are false. TATA Starbucks currently operates more than 470 stores in 76 cities across India, which continues to be a key growth market for Starbucks globally," said Starbucks as quoted by Hindustan Times in the report. The report further quoted TCPL denying the possibility of exiting India in a letter titled "Clarification on News Article Titled - Starbucks to Exit India Due to High Costs, Bad Taste, and Mounting Losses."

In the next part of the investigation, we went through National Stock Exchange's (NSE) website and found the press statement released on December 19, 2024. The statement read: 'The Company would like to state that the information in the said article is baseless', Here is the link to the statement: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://nsearchives.nseindia.com/corporate/TATACONSUM_19122024115702_TCPL_StarbuckRumourverification_191224_sd.pdf. Subsequently, the Desk concluded that Starbucks was not quitting the Indian market.

Claim: Starbucks to quit Indian market. **Fact:** Both Tata Consumer Products and Starbucks refuted the claim as 'baseless'. **Conclusion:** Multiple social media users claimed that Starbucks would exit the Indian market due to high costs and mounting losses. However, the Desk found that the article cited to make the claim was unsubstantiated. The social media posts were shared with a false claim.

The story was originally published by PTInews.com (https://www.ptinews.com/fact-detail/Starbucks-to-quit-Indian-market--No--claim-made-in-social-media-is-false/2113821) and republished by Bangalore Mirror as part of the Shakti Collective)

Citizens can help make B'luru ready for the future

BBMP seeks public participation for Bengaluru's climate action plan

Public participation is crucial to advancing Bengaluru's climate action and resilience initiatives, said Preeti Gehlot, Special Commissioner for Forests, Environment, and Climate Change and Head of the Climate Action Cell at a meeting organised by the BBMP Climate Action Cell on Saturday.

The meeting aimed to raise awareness about Bengaluru's Climate Action Plan, foster collaboration with stakeholders, and encourage citizens to engage with the initiatives led by the Climate Action Cell. Gehlot highlighted the city's vulnerability to climate change, pointing to irregular rainfall patterns, droughts, and the increasing frequency of extreme rainfall events that have affected Bengaluru in recent years.

The meeting also shed light on key activities and innovations by the Climate Action Cell. The cell comprises six fellows and a program coordinator, all dedicated to localising the city's climate action plans and overseeing related activities. "So far, over 600 organisations and individuals have registered as 'Friends of the Climate Action Cell'. These include 36 educational institutions, 134 NGOs, 42 resident welfare associations, 43 corporate entities, 16 research institutions, and 207 individual participants. To further engage citizens, the Climate Action Cell, in collaboration with CGI Bengaluru and BPAC, has developed a chatbot named 'Nisarga'. This innovative tool provides detailed information about Bengaluru's climate action and resilience initiatives, making it easier for residents to understand and contribute," she added.

Huts in Yelahanka were flooded during a spell of rain in October

> **"Citizens can access enhanced version of the Lake Management System for updates and info**
> – Preeti Gehlot, BBMP

Gehlot said that promoting renewable energy adoption is another focus area, and CSTEP, in partnership with BESCOM, showcased a unique 'Rooftop Solar Calculator' through the Climate Action Cell. This tool identifies rooftops capable of contributing to India's ambitious goal of generating 300 GW of solar energy by 2030. Alongside this, BBMP reiterated its commitment to reviving lakes across the city with the support of local communities. Managing over 1,200 parks that cater to thousands of citizens daily, BBMP launched a social media platform called 'BBMP Parks and Lakes' in collaboration with Bengawalk on Instagram and LinkedIn. This initiative encourages citizens to share photos, videos, and experiences, promoting awareness and appreciation of Bengaluru's green spaces. "To further support sustainable urban development, enhanced versions of the Lake Management System and Park Management System were introduced," she said.

— BMB

Eye on AI: Looking ahead

AI will continue to grow in 2025. But it will face major challenges along the way

In 2024, artificial intelligence (AI) continued taking large and surprising steps forward.

People started conversing with AI "resurrections" of the dead, using AI toothbrushes and confessing to an AI-powered Jesus. Meanwhile, OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, was valued at US$150 billion and claimed it was on the way to developing an advanced AI system more capable than humans. Google's AI company DeepMind made a similar claim.

These are just a handful of AI milestones over the past year. They reinforce not only how huge the technology has become, but also how it is transforming a wide range of human activities.

So what can we expect to happen in the world of AI in 2025?

Neural scaling

Neural scaling laws suggest the abilities of AI systems will increase predictably as the systems grow in size and are trained on more data. These laws have so far theorised the leap from first to second generation generative AI models such as ChatGPT.

Everyday users like us experienced this as the transition from having amusing chats with chatbots to doing useful work with AI "copilots", such as drafting project proposals or summarising emails.

Recently, these scaling laws appear to have plateaued. Making AI models bigger is no longer making them more capable.

The latest model from OpenAI, o1, attempts to overcome the size plateau by using more computer power to "think" about trickier problems. But this is likely to increase costs for users and does not solve fundamental problems such as hallucination.

The scaling plateau is a welcome pause to the move towards building an AI system that is more capable than humans. It may allow robust regulation and global consensus to catch up.

Training data

Most current AI systems rely on huge amounts of data for training. However, training data has hit a wall as most high-quality sources have been exhausted.

Companies are conducting trials in which they train AI systems on AI-generated datasets. This is despite a severe lack of understanding of new "synthetic biases" that can compound already biased AI.

AI milestones of 2024 reinforce how huge the technology has become and how it is transforming human activities

For example, in a study published earlier this year, researchers demonstrated how training with synthetic data produces models that are less accurate and disproportionately sideline underrepresented groups, despite starting with unbiased data sets.

Tech companies' need for high-quality, authentic data strengthens the case for personal data ownership. This would give people much more control over their personal data, allowing them, for example, to sell it to tech companies to train AI models within appropriate policy frameworks.

Robotics

This year Tesla announced an AI-powered humanoid robot. Known as Optimus, this robot is able to perform a number of household chores.

In 2025, Tesla intends to deploy these robots in its internal manufacturing operations with mass production for external customers in 2026.

Amazon, the world's second-largest private employer, has also deployed more than 750,000 robots in its warehouse operations, including its first autonomous mobile robot that can work independently around people.

Generalisation – that is, the ability to learn from datasets representing specific tasks and generalise this to other tasks – has been the fundamental performance gap in robotics.

This is now addressed by AI

For example, a company called Physical Intelligence has developed a model robot that can unload a dryer and fold clothes into a stack, despite not being explicitly trained to do so. The business case for affordable domestic robots continues to be strong, although they're still expensive to make.

Automation

The planned Department of Government Efficiency in the United States is also likely to drive a significant AI automation agenda in its push to reduce the number of federal agencies.

This agenda is also expected to include developing a practical framework for realising "agentic AI" in the private sector. Agentic AI refers to systems capable of performing fully independent tasks.

For example, an AI agent will be able to automate your inbox, by reading, prioritising and responding to emails, organising meetings and following up with action items and reminders.

Regulation

The incoming administration of newly elected US president Donald Trump plans to wind back efforts to regulate AI, starting with the repeal of outgoing president Joe Biden's executive order on AI. This order was passed in an attempt to limit harms while promoting innovation.

Trump's administration will also develop an open market policy where AI monopolies and other US industries are encouraged to drive an aggressive innovation agenda.

Elsewhere, however, we will see the European Union's AI Act being enforced in 2025, starting with the ban of AI systems that pose unacceptable risks. This will be followed by the rollout of transparency obligations for generative AI models, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, that pose systemic risks.

Australia is following a risk-based approach to AI regulation, much like the EU. The proposal for ten mandatory guardrails for high-risk AI, released in September, could come into force in 2025.

Workplace productivity

We can expect to see workplaces continue to invest in licenses for various AI "copilot" systems, as many early trials show they may increase productivity.

But this must be accompanied with regular AI literacy and fluency training to ensure the technology is used appropriately.

In 2025, AI developers, consumers and regulators should be mindful of what Macquarie Dictionary dubbed the word of the year in 2024: enshittification.

This is the process by which online platforms and services steadily deteriorate over time. Let's hope it doesn't happen to AI.

(By Daswin de Silva, La Trobe University, The Conversation)

BITS & BYTES

SPADEX MISSION

The SpaDeX mission, expected to launch this year aboard the PSLV-C60 rocket, will propel India to the elite club of nations with space docking capabilities, said Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Saturday.

ISRO aims to launch PSLV-C60 on December 30. However, the launch window is open till January 13.

The space agency informed that the mission has completed "all tests and clearances". The integration of the SpaDeX spacecraft is complete, and the spacecraft has been moved to Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. It is currently "undergoing preparations for launch".

While only a few countries have aced the space docking technology, it is key for India for its impending space missions including the Moon mission, and setting up the Indian space station.. **IANS**

GOOGLE BLINKS

Alphabet's Google proposed on Friday a loosening of its agreements with Apple and others to set Google as the default search engine on new devices to address a U.S. ruling that it unlawfully dominates online search.

The proposal is much narrower than the government's bid to make Google sell its Chrome browser in the antitrust case over online search. Google urged U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington to move cautiously in deciding what the company must do to restore competition after his ruling that the company holds an illegal monopoly in online search and related advertising.

While Google plans to appeal that ruling at the end of the case, it says the upcoming "remedies" phase should focus on its distribution agreements with browser developers, mobile device manufacturers, and wireless carriers. **Reuters**

MYSTERY OF DRONES

A large number of mysterious drones have been reported flying over New Jersey and across the eastern U.S., sparking speculation and concern over where they came from and why.

In response, the Federal Aviation Administration on Wednesday and Thursday temporarily banned drone flights in 22 areas of New Jersey and 30 areas in New York, mostly in and around New York City and on Long Island, where critical infrastructure is located. FAA officials said federal security agencies requested the flight restrictions, which are effective through mid-January.

The FBI, the Homeland Security Department and state agencies have been investigating, but officials say there has been nothing so far to suggest any drones have posed a national security or public safety threat. Authorities say many of the drone sightings have actually been legal drones, manned aircraft, helicopters and even stars. **AP**

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No answer as cyber crime victims keep ringing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

SMS asking the victim to contact the East Division CEN Police Station, but none of the provided numbers work."

Broseph's post sparked a flurry of responses from other users who shared similar grievances. One user reported lodging a cyber scam complaint only to find that the given contact number, 9449295760, kept ringing without any response, despite repeated attempts. Another user noted that they had been waiting for a reply to their emails and calls since April 2024, but the law enforcement authorities remained unresponsive.

Highlighting the gravity of the situation, Broseph's post criticised the lack of accessibility, saying, "How can police officers simply switch off their numbers at 3:15 p, on a working day when citizens need them the most?" He tagged the official handles of the Bengaluru City Police and Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) East Division, urging them to address the issue.

The post garnered widespread attention. "These are the ground realities no one talks about," one user commented. Another pointed out that similar issues exist with other agencies like BWSSB, where official contact numbers and online links are often unreliable.

When BM spoke to the police official of the East Division CEN Police Station they clarified the situation, stating, "The numbers were returned to the government four to five months ago, which is why they are no longer active." A senior police official added that victims can now directly call the national cyber crime helpline number, 1903, or register complaints on the Cybercrime Portal.

Additionally, it was explained that the police have transitioned to standardised numbers beginning with 948080, which are now government-designated official lines. The official assured that police officers are available at all times and that complaints can also be submitted through the Karnataka State Police (KSP) app, or via social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. While these measures aim to streamline communication, the lack of timely updates about the changes has left citizens in a lurch.

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tender & notices

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This is to inform the General Public that the Survey Number No 34/3 and 34/4 Shankanipura Village Kasaba Hobli Banglore Rural District is **UNDER LITIGATION** vide **OS No 906/2024** pending on the file of the Honorable Senior Civil Judge and JMFC at Hosakote and also the Plaintiffs in the said case have obtained injunction order against the defendants for non alienetion of the said survey numbers To an extent of 13 quntas in survey 34/3 and 1 acre 1 qunta in survey No 34/4

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personal

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HEALTH TIP: Most B-group vitamins cannot be stored by the body and must be consumed regularly in the diet

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All you need to know about...

Heart muscles

New hope
Some people with artificial hearts can regenerate heart muscle, according to a study, an advance that may open the door to new ways to treat and someday may also cure heart failure.

Heart failure
There is currently no cure for heart failure. The treatment for advanced heart failure includes a transplant, and a pump replacement via an artificial heart. Known as the left ventricular assist device, this can help the heart pump blood.

Newly generated
Researchers from the University of Arizona's College of Medicine in the US said that "skeletal muscle has a significant ability to regenerate after injury".
The team began the study with tissue from artificial heart patients. They included researchers from Sweden and Germany and used their own innovative method of carbon dating human heart tissue to track whether these samples contained newly generated cells.
The results, published in the journal Circulation, showed that people with these artificial hearts could regenerate muscle cells at more than six times the rate of healthy hearts.

Strongest proof so far
"This is the strongest evidence we have, so far, that human heart muscle cells can actually regenerate, which really is exciting, because it solidifies the notion that there is an intrinsic capacity of the human heart to regenerate," said Hesham Sadek, director of the Tucson's Sarver Heart Center at the varsity. The researcher explained that some artificial heart patients can remove their devices because of the reversal of symptoms. This can happen if the artificial heart provides cardiac muscles the equivalent of bed rest in a person recovering from a soccer injury.
The findings suggest it "may be possible to target the molecular pathways involved in cell division to enhance the heart's ability to regenerate," Sadek said. —IANS

PIECE OF CAKE

Make the season merrier with these X-Mas must-haves

PLUM CAKE

INGREDIENTS
- Butter 1KG
- Sugar 1KG
- Egg 20NO
- Flour 1KG
- Soaked fruit 1200GM
- Caramel color 20GM
- Vanilla essence 5ML

METHOD
- Grease and flour your cake ring. Shake off any excess flour and set it aside.
- Beat the butter until smooth, and then add sugar. Cream until light and fluffy.
- In a separate bowl, combine eggs, caramel color, and vanilla. Slowly put egg mixture into your butter mixture with mixer on low speed. Pause to scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl, then increase the speed and beat for another 1-2 minutes.
- Reduce speed to low and gradually add flour. Scrape the bowl again and stir on medium speed until well combined, then beat for an additional minute.
- Then add soaked alcoholic fruit you should have a completely smooth, uniform batter. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Bake in 180c oven for 30 minutes. Test with a wooden skewer for doneness.
- Cool for 20 minutes, and then run a knife around the sides and center of the pan before carefully inverting onto a cooling rack. Allow to cool completely before serving.

PANETONNE

INGREDIENTS
- Flour 600gm
- Yeast 30gm
- Water 160gm
- Eggs 5 no
- Orange zest 1 no
- Sugar 68gm
- Vanilla essence 5gm
- Salt 5gm
- Soft butter 170gm
- Cold butter 14gm
- Vegetable oil spray (for the dough bowl)
- Soaked fruits 350gm

METHOD
- In the bowl of a stand mixer, stir 120gm flour and 1 tablespoon instant yeast together until

blended. Add the water and mix with a spoon until it reaches the consistency of thick cake batter. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and allow it to rise for 45 minutes
- The sponge should double in size. If using active dry yeast, place the water in the bowl first, stir in the yeast, and let it sit until bubbly, about 5 minutes. Then stir in the flour.
- In a bowl, whisk together the remaining flour and salt until well blended.
- Once the sponge has risen, transfer the bowl to a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Set it to medium speed, and add the eggs to the sponge one at a time, incorporating each fully before adding the next. Continue mixing on medium speed and incorporate the orange zest, sugar, and vanilla.
- Drop the mixer to low speed and gradually add about 2 1/2 cups of the flour mixture and mix for about 2 minutes, or until blended. You might need to scrape the sides of the bowl occasionally. The dough should be very soft and stretchy. On low speed, gradually add the remaining 1 1/2 cups of flour until fully incorporated.
- Switch to the dough hook. Knead on low speed for 8 minutes, or until the dough becomes very smooth and elastic.
- Stop 2 or 3 times to push down any dough that climbs up on the dough hook.
- With the mixer on low speed, gradually add the butter, a few tablespoons at a time, until fully incorporated. Continue mixing with the dough hook for 3 minutes until the dough is silky and shiny.
- If the dough still seems extremely sticky, gradually add 1 to 4 tablespoons of additional flour. The dough should be very soft, sticky, and just barely pull away from the sides of the bowl, but not the bottom.
- With the dough still in the bowl, shape it into a ball. Lightly spray with vegetable oil and cover with a piece of plastic wrap directly on the dough. Refrigerate for 8 hours or up to 2 days.

STOLLEN BREAD

INGREDIENTS
- Warm milk (110 degrees F/45 degrees C) 200ml
- Fresh yeast 30gm
- Bread flour 300gm
- White sugar 40gm
- Butter, softened 40gm
- Large egg 1no
- Salt 5gm
- Soaked fruits 375gm
- Marzipan170gm
- Icing sugar 10gm
- Ground cinnamon 5gm

METHOD
- Place warm milk and yeast in a bowl. Let stand until creamy, about 10 minutes.
- Combine the yeast mixture, 2 cups of bread flour, white sugar, butter, egg, and salt in a large mixing bowl; stir well to combine.
- Gradually incorporate the remaining flour, adding 1/4 cup at a time and stirring thoroughly after each addition.
- When the dough has come together, transfer it to a lightly floured surface. Knead in the candied citron, currants, golden raisins, and cherries until evenly combined. Continue kneading until smooth, about 8 minutes.
- Lightly grease a large bowl, place the dough in it, and turn it to coat with oil.
- Cover it with a damp cloth and let it rise in a warm spot until it doubles in size, approximately 1 hour. Lightly grease a baking sheet. Carefully deflate the dough and transfer it to a surface lightly dusted with flour.
- Roll the marzipan into a rope and place it along the centre of the dough.
- Fold dough over to cover it; pinch the seams together to seal. Place the loaf with the seam-side facing down on the prepared baking sheet.
- Cover with a damp cloth and let rise until doubled in volume, about 40 minutes.
- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Place the stollen in the preheated oven and bake for 10 minutes. Then, reduce the heat to 300 degrees F (150 degrees C) and continue baking for another 30 to 40 minutes, or until the loaf is golden brown and the bottom sounds hollow when tapped.
- Let it cool on a wire rack, then dust with confectioners' sugar and sprinkle with cinnamon.

Recipes by Shijiz Lamba, Sous chef – Bakery, Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road

A film that will make you think

UI is a much-awaited film, helmed by Real Star Upendra after a gap of nine years. His previous movie as a director was Uppi 2 that was released in 2015. Upendra plays the protagonist of this film too. Upendra has played dual roles of Satya and Kalki Bhagawan. The movie makes audiences think.

Upendra, who launched Uttama Prajaakeeya Party - has tried to focus on the current political situation in the country, including Karnataka, especially in Bengaluru, where ruling party leaders are known for allegedly demanding 40 per cent commission from contractors. It also focuses on how society is divided on caste, religion and creed. Another interesting element is how mining, builder and timber mafia are destroying nature.

UI
3.5 RATING ★★★½☆
- **DIRECTOR** Upendra
- **ACTORS** Upendra, Reeshma Nanaiah, Nidhi Subbaiah, Guruprasad, Achyuth Kumar, Murali Sharma
- **Duration** 132 minutes
- **Certification** U/A

The movie begins with a disclaimer asking intelligent audiences to leave the theatre and stating that those who remain in the theatre are fools. The next scene has all types of trains running at high speed. Immediately, the movie focuses on the problems of people. Satya (Upendra) wants to teach a lesson to villains in society. The movie throws light on how pickpockets and anti-social elements try to become leaders in society. Later, Satya says that he is not Satya but Kalki Bhagawan. The next scene is Satya (Upendra) in a cage. The audiences are told that Satya and Kalki are twins born of rape. Satya prefers peace and tranquility while Kalki wants to eliminate people responsible for his mother's situation. What happens to Kalki and Satya is what UI is all about.

As far as the performances of the actors are concerned, Upendra is at his best. His dialogue delivery and body language make the audiences, especially his hard-core fans, really understand what he is going through. Ravishankar, as Katri Seena, a pickpocket, has acted well. Reeshma Nanaiah looks glamorous and is convincing as a possessive lover. Achyuth Kumar, as an astrologer, and Murali Sharma, as a movie critic, have provided good support.

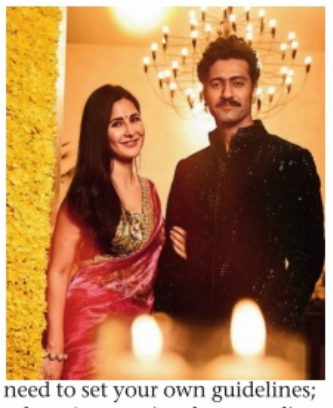
Songs are good, especially the song Cheap Cheap Ella Cheap. Ajneesh Lokanath has scored a hit. The background score, especially the moaning sound, is spot on. The movie's style and graphics add value to it.

The movie is worth a watch for all intelligent audiences.

—Y Maheswara Reddy

Tip from hubby

Bollywood's beloved couple Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal recently marked their third wedding anniversary on December 9, 2024. Over the years, the duo has become a shining example of balancing personal and professional lives, often opening up about their journey as a married couple in the spotlight.



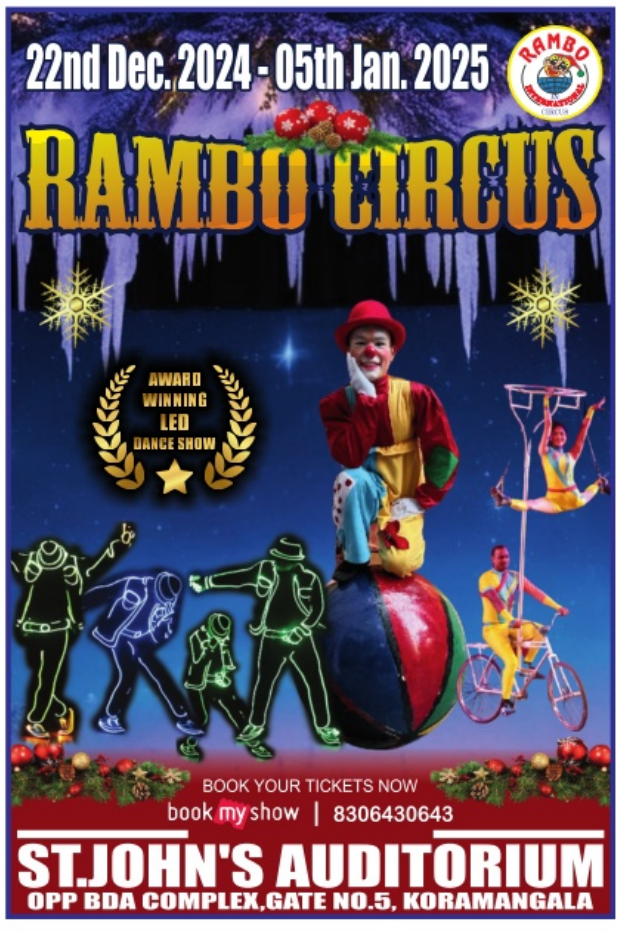
In an interview with The Week, Katrina revealed some heartwarming anecdotes about their life together. Speaking about her demanding dual careers as an actress and entrepreneur, Katrina admitted that juggling responsibilities wasn't easy initially. She shared, "Even now, my husband asks me to put down the phone, and I want to send just one more email."

Vicky, known for his calm demeanor, often encourages her to prioritise personal moments over business commitments.

Katrina also reflected on the stark differences between her two professions. While acting comes with a fixed schedule, running a business operates around the clock. "With a business, there's no schedule. You need to set your own guidelines; otherwise, you just keep sending emails and having discussions," the Ek Tha Tiger star noted.

When asked if she and Vicky ever squabble over counter space in their shared bathroom, Katrina quipped with a laugh, "Not at all! Vicky is an adjusting and understanding husband."

Katrina was last seen in Merry Christmas, which hit the screens earlier this year. Fans are eagerly awaiting her next venture, Jee Le Zaraa. Vicky, on the other hand, has a packed lineup with Chhaava, Love & War, and Mahavatar, promising an exciting phase in his career. **—ETimes**



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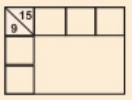
@BangaloreMirror

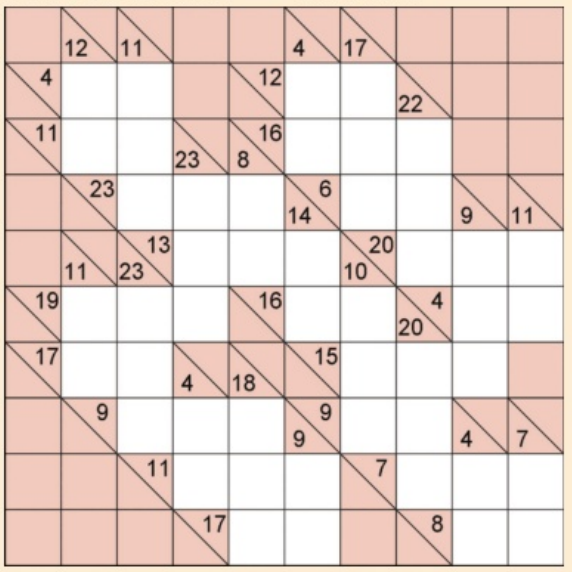
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

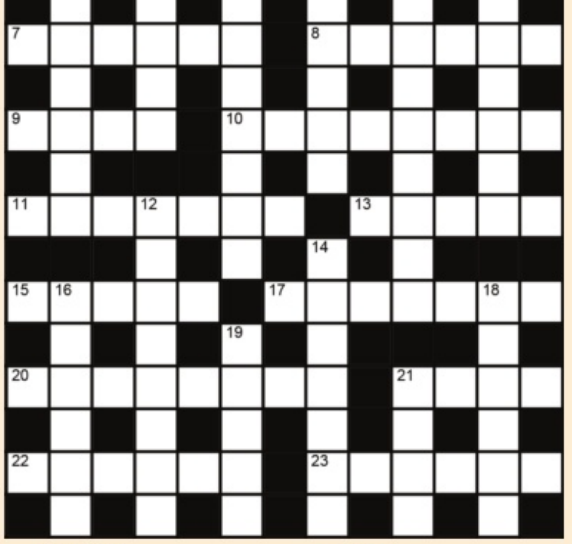


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Government office (6)
8 Roman emperor ___ Aurelius (6)
9 At a great distance (4)
10 Meant or signified (8)
11 Documented (7)
13 Okra soup (5)
15 At the same level (5)
17 Futile (7)
20 More expensive (8)
21 Livelihood (4)
22 Consume, eat or corrode (6)
23 Courageously (6)

DOWN

1 Incompetent person (6)
2 Look closely at (4)
3 Roman god or planet (7)
4 Leaves out (5)
5 Peaceful (8)
6 Magnificent (6)
12 Hauling or pulling force (8)
14 Attribute (7)
16 Named the price of (6)
18 Brief periods (6)
19 Dye vats–"skier" anagram? (5)
21 Chicken curry native to Karnataka (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: K EQUALS G

GUDTBKR QZ XRBT PUMEQCK UC B VQCDWR MUCKRT.

Linemaro

Do you mind if I fantasize about you?

Mindchow

Originality is the fine art of remembering what you heard but forgetting where you heard it

Joke of the day

Patient: Doctor, Doctor! I've had an accident! Doctor: The rest rooms are down the hall.

Loop

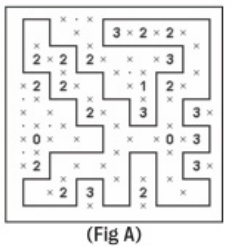
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

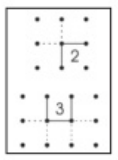
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

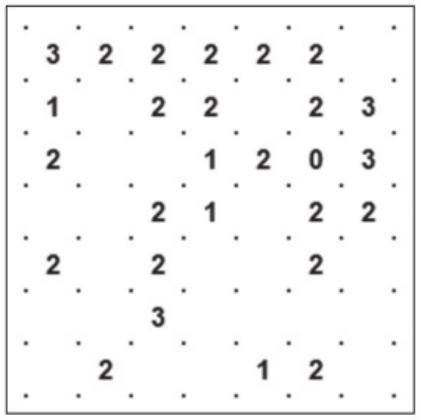
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



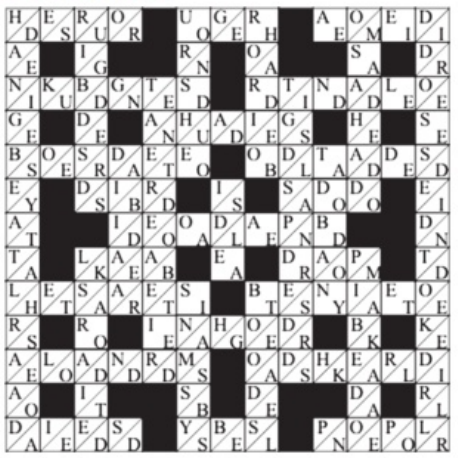
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



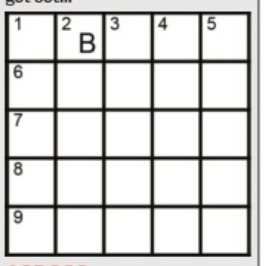
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

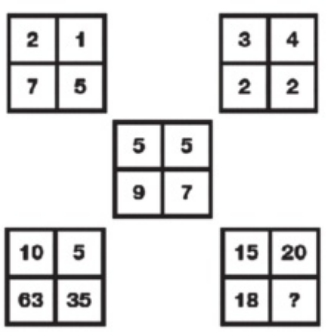
1 Caaba; 6 Or bad; 7 Or rub; 8 Topes; 9 Halts

DOWN

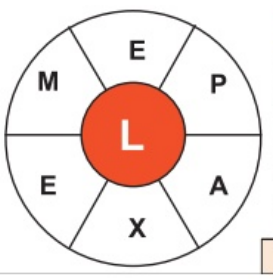
1 Babes; 2 Shrub; 3 A taro; 4 Lorca; 5 Pod at

Mensapuzzle

Which number replaces the question mark to finish this puzzle?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

11 Average; **13** Good; **15** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	4					7		
3		2			5			
9	6			8				
				4			5	6
	1		2		8		9	
2	5			3				
				1			6	8
			4			9		2
		4					7	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 7

2 3 4 8

Medium = 19

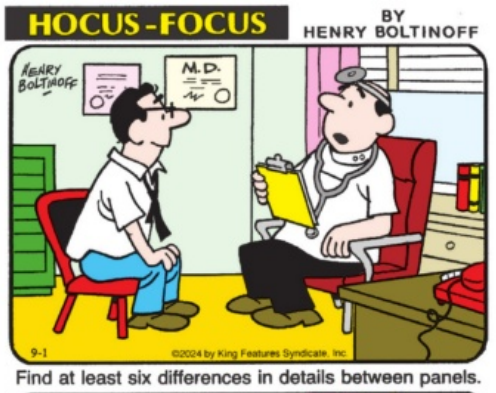
1 4 6 9

Hard = 36

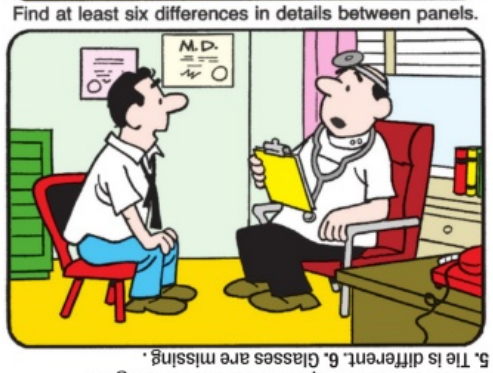
2 6 6 6

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



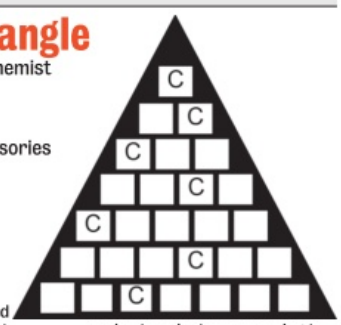
Differences: 1. Arm of chair is different. 2. Chair leg is moved. 3. Mouth is open. 4. Certificate is higher. 5. Tie is different. 6. Glasses are missing.

Riddler

A word I know, six letters it contains subtract just one, and twelve is what remains.

Alpha triangle

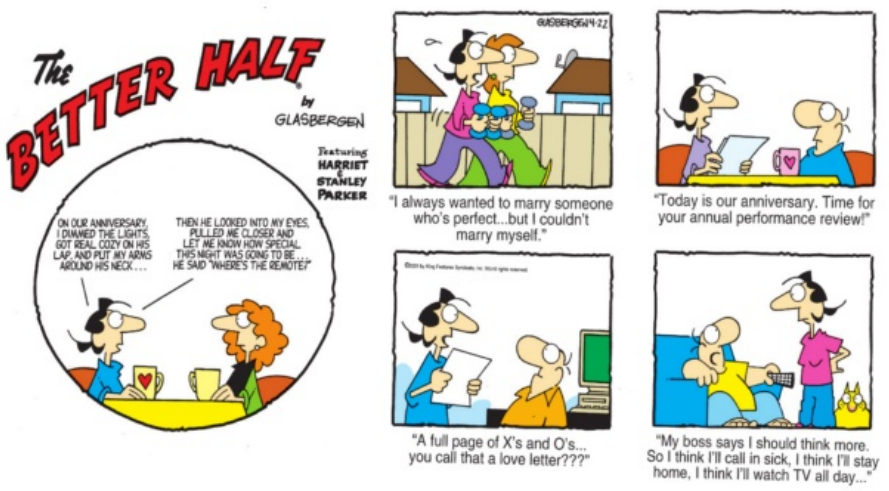
1 Carbon for the chemist
2 Account, abbr.
3 Surpass
4 Tempo
5 Superhero accessories
6 Gaps
7 Gets away



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS


The BETTER HALF
by GLASBERGEN
Featuring HARRIET & STANLEY PARKER
ON OUR ANNIVERSARY, I DIMMED THE LIGHTS, GOT REAL COZY ON HIS LAP, AND PUT MY ARMS AROUND HIS NECK...
THEN HE LOOKED INTO MY EYES, PULLED ME CLOSER AND LET ME KNOW HOW SPECIAL THIS NIGHT WAS GOING TO BE... HE SAID "WHERE'S THE REMOTE?"
"I always wanted to marry someone who's perfect...but I couldn't marry myself."
"Today is our anniversary. Time for your annual performance review!"
"A full page of X's and O's... you call that a love letter???"
"My boss says I should think more. So I think I'll call in sick, I think I'll stay home, I think I'll watch TV all day..."

WANNA GO RIDE OUR BIKES?
NAW.
PLAY A GAME?
NO. CLIMB A TREE?
NO. PLAY VIDEO GAMES?
NO. GOOF AROUND ON THE SWING SET?
NO. READ COMICS?
NO. WATCH TV?
NO. MAKE COOKIES?
NO. CATCH BUGS?
NO...HAVE A RACE?
NO. HIDE AND SEEK?
NO. BUILD A FORT?
NO! COMPLAIN TO MOM THAT WE'RE BORED!
WE THOUGHT OF SOMETHING TO DO!

YOU WOULD'VE GOTTEN AWAY IF YOU HADN'T FOUND ME...
CAN IT. WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER!
TRY TO HOLD ON. I'M GONNA CHECK ON FLASH. SEE WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE SHIP.
ALL MY FAULT...
FLASH GORDON
BY JIM KEEFE 1-1
FLASH HASTILY ATTEMPTS TO SEND OUT A DISTRESS SIGNAL AS THE SHIP BEGINS COUNTDOWN TO DETONATION!
WHAT'S WRONG?!
SYSTEM OVERLOAD! THIS THING'S GONNA BLOW!
WARNING...30 SECONDS UNTIL DETONATION...
GRAB BULLOK! CLEAR THE AREA! I'LL SALVAGE WHAT I CAN!
...20 SECONDS UNTIL DETONATION...
BULLOK..? HE'S GONE!
THEN RUN!
...10 SECONDS...
...5...4...3...2...1...
BRA-DA-BA-BOOM!!!
NEXT: THE STOWAWAY!

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you may feel low in energy. It's important to control your short temper and stay focused on your goals, avoiding distractions. Refrain from investing in unnecessary items. Lovebirds should avoid arguments over trivial matters. It's advised to avoid overnight travel and return home on time to ensure safety and comfort.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, you may seek peace of mind. The blessings of the moon could help you regain focus. Avoid making investments in property or other assets for now. Domestic life may bring some joyful moments, but avoid arrogance and ego clashes with your spouse. Disputes with a business partner are likely to be resolved amicably.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, you will successfully handle opponents and hidden enemies. A favourable decision in a legal matter may boost your confidence. Your boss may appreciate your dedication and hard work, potentially leading to new responsibilities or a promotion. Singles might find their soulmate, adding joy to the day.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
With the support of your strong network, you may successfully implement business plans today. Your wisdom and strategic decisions are likely to lead to profits. Domestic life will be harmonious, with good understanding between you and your spouse, strengthening your bond.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, health issues may leave you feeling impatient. It's crucial to manage your temper. Avoid spending money on unnecessary items, as it could strain your savings. Lovebirds are advised to steer clear of unimportant discussions to avoid conflicts that might lead to breakups.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Blessed by the moon, today your destiny seems to be in your favour. You'll feel energetic and focused on your work, with hard work yielding success. Support from subordinates will be encouraging. Short work-related travel may be on the cards, and good news could come from a sibling. You might also plan to renovate your home or office, showcasing your creativity.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, happiness surrounds you. You may consider purchasing creative items to enhance your lifestyle. Spending on friends and family could bring joy. Investments in assets might be on your mind. Singles may find a suitable match, and lovebirds are likely to enjoy quality time together.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today, you'll manage to control unnecessary expenses, leading to better savings. Your creativity will shine, whether at work or home, enhancing your social status. Lovebirds might receive support from family and friends regarding marriage plans

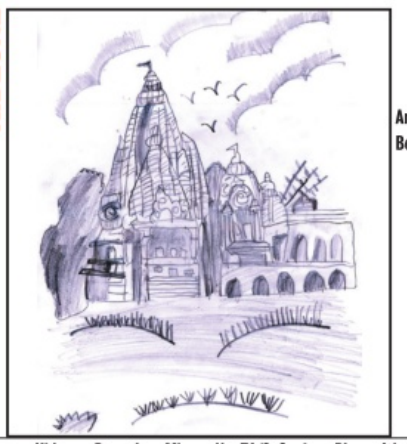
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, you might feel dull and unhappy. Strive to maintain a balance between earnings and expenditures. Avoid excessive travel or overworking, as it could impact your health. Students should start planning for higher studies, while lovebirds should avoid arguments over trivial issues.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Blessed by the moon, today brings opportunities to make new business plans, with the support of colleagues to implement them. Stuck payments from clients may be recovered, boosting business liquidity. However, anxiety might arise by late evening, potentially affecting your sleep.

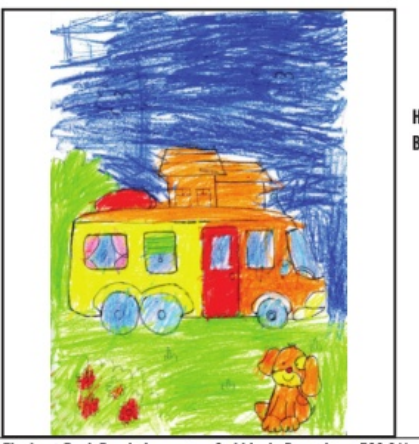
Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today is promising for growth. Business people might acquire new clients, increasing profits. Singles may find a suitable match. Be open and honest with your spouse to avoid misunderstandings in domestic life. Job seekers might land a new job, and those employed could see prospects for promotion.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, you may feel spiritually inclined, planning visits to religious places for peace of mind. Acts of charity and moral support for others bring fulfilment. You'll enjoy moments of satisfaction and patience, making the day rewarding for you and those around you.

KIDZONE



Anaya, Bengaluru



Harika, Bengaluru

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Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M (200½*90½*12½)/(45½*75½) = (25½*8½*2½*45½*3½*2) / (45½*3½*25½) = 8½*2½*2 = 16½*2 =4*2 = 8

BULL'S EYE
ample, axle, EXAMPLE, expel, lame, lamp, leap, male, maple, meal, pale, palm, peal, peel, plea

RIDDLER Dozens

QUOTE UNCODE
Courage is fear holding on a minute longer.

FAST FIVE

A	B	A	C	A
B	R	O	A	D
E	S	T	O	P
S	H	A	L	T

STRIKE OUT

H	E	R	O	U	G	H
A	I	N	O	A	A	R
N	U	D	G	E	D	R
G	E	N	U	D	E	S
B	O	R	A	T	E	B
E	L	A	N	D	S	A
R	R	E	A	G	E	R
H	E	A	R	T	S	B
T	K	E	A	A	D	O
A	D	E	A	D	E	N
Y	S	I	R	I	A	D
W	R	I	T	T	E	N
A	F	A	R	I	N	T
F	E	P	I	A	P	
D	P	J	O	T	S	
D	E	D	Y	E	S	P
A	T	S	D	D	L	
E	L	A	N	D	S	A
R	R	E	A	G	E	R
H	E	A	R	T	S	B
T	K	E	A	A	D	O
A	D	E	A	D	E	N
Y	S	I	R	I	A	D
W	R	I	T	T	E	N
A	F	A	R	I	N	T
F	E	P	I	A	P	
B	U	R	E	A	U	M
D	E	V	O	U	R	
T	I	E	I	O	L	
C	O	S	T	L	I	E
U	C	K	C		P	
E	Q	U	A	L	U	S
R			R	A	I	
G	U	M	B	O		
T	S	O	R			
E	N	D	E	D		
S	T	E				

QUICK

D	P	J	O	T	S	
B	U	R	E	A	U	M
D	E	V	O	U	R	
T	I	E	I	O	L	
C	O	S	T	L	I	E
U	C	K	C		P	
E	Q	U	A	L	U	S
R			R	A	I	
G	U	M	B	O		
T	S	O	R			
E	N	D	E	D		
S	T	E				

MENSA PUZZLE
14. Add together numbers in corresponding segments of the upper 2 squares, and put the results in the middle square. Numbers in the lower left square equal the product of the upper left and central squares, and numbers in the lower right square equal the product of the upper right and central squares.

SUDOKU

5	4	8	3	6	2	7
3	7	2	1	9	5	6
9	6	1	7	8	4	5
8	3	7	9	4	1	2
4	1	6	2	5	8	3
2	5	9	6	3	7	8
7	2	3	5	1	9	4
1	8	5	4	7	6	9
6	9	4	8	2	3	1

ALPHA TRIANGLE
C, Ac, Cap, Pace, Capes, Spaces, Escapes.

GO FIGURE
Easy
4 + 8 − 3 − 2 = 7
Medium
4 + 9 + 6 / 1 = 19
Hard
6 + 6 + 6 x 2 = 36

LOOP

KAKURO

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Swiggy Instamart

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